

**Statement of Common Ground
between
Leeds City Council and
Walton Neighbourhood Planning
Steering Group**

**Walton Neighbourhood Plan
Submission – (Add date)**

1 Introduction / Context

- 1.1 This statement of common ground has been prepared jointly between the parties consisting of Leeds City Council ('the Council') and Walton Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group ('the Walton NP Steering Group') to support the Independent Examination of the Walton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The statement sets out the main points of agreement and understanding between both parties with regard to the submission draft Walton Neighbourhood Development Plan - ('the NP') and its relationship with the emerging Leeds Site Allocations Plan (the SAP'). The statement is intended to assist the Independent Examiner with the examination of the NP.
- 1.3 This statement relates solely to issues associated with the Council's SAP proposal to re-designate the majority of the existing UDP Rural Land designation surrounding Walton as Green Belt and the relationship with the NP proposed housing allocations.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council and Walton NP Steering Group have been working positively together throughout the preparation of the SAP and the Walton Neighbourhood Development Plan in respect of issues relating to the Walton neighbourhood area
- 2.2 The Leeds SAP is now at a very advanced stage following its Submission to the Secretary of State on 5th May 2017 and the conclusion of Stage 1 Examination Hearing sessions relating to employment, retail, green space and Gypsy and Traveller issues in October 2017. The Stage 2 SAP Hearing sessions relating to housing and the release of Green Belt for housing are scheduled to take place in July 2018 following a further 6 week publication on the Revised Submission Draft version of the SAP in January and February 2018. Adoption of the SAP is expected in spring 2019 subject to the Plan being found sound by the Inspectors.
- 2.3 The submitted SAP does not propose any development allocations within the Walton Neighbourhood Area. However, the SAP proposes to designate new Green Belt land surrounding the village (See appendix 1).
- 2.4 The Walton NP proposes ~~23 small~~ housing allocations (H2 and H4) which are currently situated on land designated as Rural Land. However as it stands, this land would become designated Green Belt on adoption of the SAP.

- 2.5 Green Belt boundaries can only be altered through a review of the Local Plan. This means that Neighbourhood Plans cannot seek to change Green Belt boundaries or allocate land for inappropriate development within them. However, on non-Green Belt land such as the Rural Land surrounding Walton (as present), Neighbourhood Plans can in principle seek to allocate housing sites. Housing development forms inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Merely identifying a site in the NP for housing will not therefore remove the need to demonstrate very special circumstances during the planning application process. There would be no certainty that very special circumstances could be demonstrated, thus restricting the achievability of the NP housing allocations.
- 2.6 Given the projected timescales for adoption of the Plans it is likely that the NP, if successful at examination and referendum, would be made before the SAP is adopted. Consequently, concerns exist that any housing allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan could quickly become undevelopable or out of date on adoption of the SAP if they are washed over by Green Belt following the adoption of the Site Allocations Plan.
- 2.7 The Council is not currently seeking to make a modification to the Site Allocations proposed Green Belt boundary to exclude the 3 housing sites proposed within the draft Neighbourhood Plan as this is considered to pre-empt the result of the Neighbourhood Plan Examination and Referendum. The NP housing sites could consequently be left vulnerable to unsuitable development if they are found unacceptable by the Independent Examiner of the Neighbourhood Plan if they formed white land (no designation) within the Site Allocations Plan.

3 Agreed matters between the Council and Walton Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group

- 3.1 It is agreed that it was not the intention of the Council's Green Belt proposals to seek to prevent any locally-led small-scale housing proposals being brought forward through a Neighbourhood Plan, where appropriate.
- 3.2 It is agreed that should the housing allocations within the NP form part of the Made NP that the Council will notify the SAP Inspectors and seek to make minor changes to proposed new SAP Green Belt boundary to exclude the housing sites (if deemed necessary).

4 Agreement of Statement of Common Ground

Signed on behalf of Leeds City Council:

Name: Tim Hill

Role: Chief Planning Officer

Date:

Signature:

Signed on behalf of Walton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

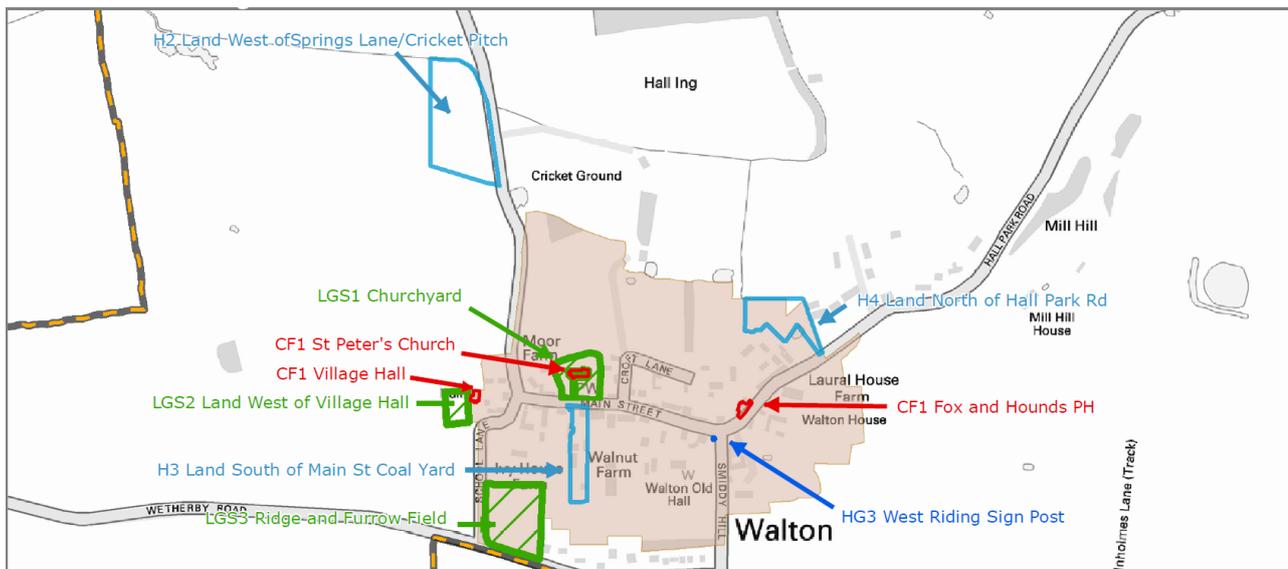
Name:

Role:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix 1 – Draft Walton NP: Proposed housing sites



Appendix 2 – SAP Plan proposed Green Belt boundary surrounding Walton

